IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as set forth below:

1-24. (Cancelled)

25. (New) A method comprising:

initiating a first process separate from a first application that comprises one or more second processes;

assigning a unique virtual Internet Protocol (IP) address and virtual hostname to the first application;

the first process registering the virtual IP address and the virtual hostname with a software module interposed between the first application and an operating system;

the first process initiating at least one of the one or more second processes of the first application; and

the at least one second process inheriting the virtual IP address and the virtual hostname from the first process.

26. (New) The method as recited in claim 25 further comprising the first process using a first application identifier in the registering, and the inheriting comprising receiving the first application identifier from the first process.

27. (New) The method as recited in claim 25 further comprising:

the first application issuing a hostname request; and

the software module responding to the hostname request with the virtual hostname.

28. (New) The method as recited in claim 25 further comprising resolving the virtual hostname to the virtual IP address.

29. (New) The method as recited in claim 28 further comprising using the virtual IP address as a local address.

30. (New) The method as recited in claim 28 further comprising configuring one or more address resolution mechanisms to resolve the virtual hostname to the virtual IP address.

31. (New) The method as recited in claim 30 wherein the resolving is performed responsive to a request from a second application.

32. (New) The method as recited in claim 31 wherein the one or more address resolution mechanisms comprise a domain name service.

33. (New) The method as recited in claim 30 wherein the one or more address resolution mechanisms comprise a file maintained by the operating system.

34. (New) The method as recited in claim 25 wherein the assigning is dynamic.

35. (New) The method as recited in claim 25 wherein the assigning is static.

36. (New) The method as recited in claim 25 further comprising establishing a virtual interface having the virtual IP address and virtual hostname.

37. (New) The method as recited in claim 36 further comprising associating the virtual IP address with a physical IP address of a computer on which the first application is executing.

38. (New) The method as recited in claim 36 further comprising associating the virtual IP address with a loopback address in a computer on which the first application is executing.

39. (New) A computer readable medium storing a plurality of instructions which, when executed as a first process:

> register a unique virtual IP address and a virtual hostname assigned to a first
>> application with a software module interposed between the first
>> application and an operating system; and

> initiate at least one of one or more second processes of the first application,
>> wherein the at least one second process inherits the virtual IP address and
>> the virtual hostname from the first process.

40. (New) The computer readable medium as recited in claim 39 wherein the first process uses a first application identifier in registering the virtual IP address and the virtual hostname, and the inheriting comprises receiving the first application identifier from the first process.

41. (New) The computer readable medium as recited in claim 39 further storing a second plurality of instructions comprising the software module, wherein the second plurality of instructions, when executed:

> receive a hostname request issued by the first application; and

> respond to the hostname request with the virtual hostname.

42. (New) The computer readable medium as recited in claim 39 further storing a second plurality of instructions which, when executed, establish a virtual interface having the virtual IP address and virtual hostname.

43. (New) The computer readable medium as recited in claim 42 wherein the second plurality of instructions, when executed, associate the virtual IP address with a physical IP address of a computer on which the first application is executing.

44. (New) The computer readable medium as recited in claim 42 wherein the second plurality of instructions, when executed, associate the virtual IP address with a loopback address in a computer on which the first application is executing.

45. (New) A computer system comprising:

    hardware configured to execute instructions; and

    the computer readable medium as recited in claim 39 coupled to the hardware.